FELLOWSHIP IN
PRAYER

lume 38, No. 2 April 1987

The spring of the amazing energy which enables the great mystics to rise to freedom and dominate their world is latent in all of us: an integral part of our humanity. Where the mystic has a genius for the Absolute, we have each a little buried talent, . . . and the growth of this talent, this spark of the soul, once we permit its emergence, will conform to inexorable conditions of transcendence . . . Every person who awakens to consciousness of a Reality which transcends the normal world of sense . . . is put upon a road which follows . . . the path which the mystic treads. . . . The success with which we follow this way to freedom and full life will depend on the intensity of our love and will; our capacity for self-discipline, our steadfastness and courage. It will depend on the generosity and completeness of our outgoing passion for absolute beauty, absolute goodness, or absolute truth . . . When the "new birth" takes place in us, the new life-process of the deeper self begins . . . We will know that spiral ascent towards higher levels, those oscillations of consciousness between light and darkness, . . . which accompany the growth of the transcendental powers. Receiving a new vision of the world, we will be spurred by it to a total dedication, an active surrender of our whole being, to that aspect of the Infinite which we have perceived . . . We will be forced to those sacrifices which every form of genius demands.

Cover selection from Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism*.

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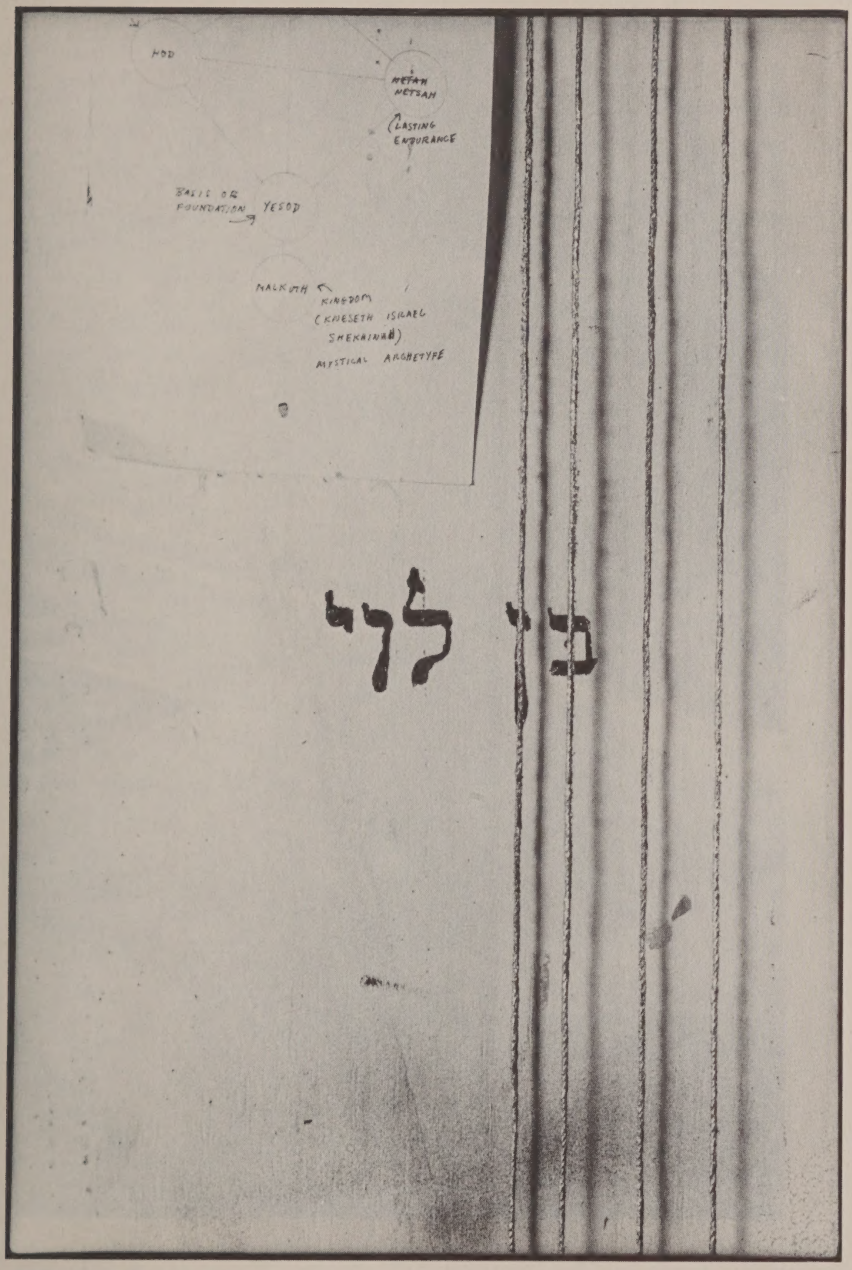
We want to thank you for returning to us—in abundance—the Reader Survey contained in the October issue of "Fellowship In Prayer." Your outpouring of gratitude for the publication, and for the October issue in particular, was most appreciated. Needless to say, we will give you a full report of the Survey's results as soon as possible. In the meantime, if you have not yet sent us your questionnaire, it is not too late to do so.

You will have noticed that the publication is evolving. A new format is being shaped that builds on two traditions: one created by Paul Griffith, the gifted editor of "Fellowship In Prayer" from 1966 to 1983, the other developed from the time of his death until 1986 by a succession of editors. We hope to combine the best of both with a limited number of innovations based on our readers' interests and contemporary trends in world religions and spirituality. Original articles and poetry will continue the earlier tradition, occasional reprints the second one.

One of our new features, "A Transforming Experience," describes a spiritual experience that had an outcome for the good of a person, group, or institution. We want to thank you for the warm encouragement with which you have responded to this feature, and to invite you again to send us descriptions of your own transforming moments. There is no need for you to be a professional writer or to express yourself with eloquence or sophistication. We are interested in your *story*, not your *style*, since the point of the feature is to demonstrate that instances of intense religious experience bear fruit in the world. Your manuscript must be typed and double spaced, though.

Finally, while it has been traditional at Fellowship In Prayer to focus on Christianity at Easter time, the present edition includes materials from Buddhist, Sufi, Hindu, and other sources, as well as Christian ones. We do this because our readership is no longer primarily Christian, but includes members of a great variety of religions, and, predominantly, the "unchurched," who adhere to no formal creed. In fact, many questionnaire respondents recorded as their religious affiliation, "Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, Muslim, Hindu, etc." Like Gandhi, apparently, they perceive themselves to be citizens of a universal commonwealth of people undivided by doctrines, bonded by experience of the imminent-transcendent Reality in which all life has meaning and all being coheres.

MFG


HOD
NETAH
NETSAH
(LASTING
ENDURANCE
BASIS OR
FOUNDATION YESOD
MALKUTH
KINGDOM
(KNESETH ISRAEL
SHEKAINAH)
MYSTICAL ARCHETYPE
מי לי

Tom Dunham

To study without meditation is labor wasted; to meditate without study is perilous.

Confucius

Intuitively we know that the only way we may fulfill our life's goal is by developing our higher nature.

Carol K. Anthony

It is important to know of pain. It destroys our self-pride, our arrogance, our indifference toward others.

Chaim Potok

I am offering you life or death, blessing or curse. Choose life, then, so that you and your descendants may live.

Dt. 30.19

Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead.

Eph. 5.14

Life breaks us all sometimes, but some grow strong at broken places.

Hemingway

Criticism and blame are just alike: they give us energy.

Source unknown

Those who love and are separated can live in suffering, but it is not despair; they know that love exists.

Camus

Truth is subjectivity.

Kierkegaard

No Part of Me

FREDA A. GARDNER

Comparing "contemporary apostles" to those who followed Jesus Christ, the author suggests that "the cost of discipleship" has to do with the laying aside of credentials and caring for others' needs. If we will forget our title, talents, travel, education, and success, she writes, for the sake of solidarity and service, then we will be one in the will of God.

We have come quite a long way from Holy Week to this day but that week and these days may have more that make them similar than what we might, on first reflection, think.

I suppose that it would not be stretching the biblical narrative too much to say that we might be the contemporary apostles, those who had been invited to follow Jesus and who had come the long way to the upper room. Granted it's a bit difficult for some of us to identify with those twelve men, but I expect that it's also difficult for most of us, knowing how the story plays out, to admit that we might have come to that room with some of the same attitudes, feelings, and intentions of the original dozen.

Jesus had invited them, not to swear an oath or write a creed or give assent to a set of principles or a philosophy or a list of rules . . . Jesus had said, follow me . . . and here they were. Along the way Jesus had spoken to them in their language. He didn't exclude them by talking guild talk. (Maybe guild talk doesn't become real until two or three gather together and get impressed with the shape and sound of their own thoughts and words.) Jesus spoke with them about the ordinary things of their in-common life . . . about lilies and children and wages and neighbors. But it never came out quite as they'd expected. It was as if everything they knew had to be known differently. And I suppose that this evening meal to which they came, as they had come so many times before, turned out to be a little like that too.

They must have come pretty weary . . . much had happened since that incredible parade. They came with a good bit of tension among them, in

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spite of what today we would call bonding or community, the closeness to each other that travel on the way may call forth. The tension was, in part, anxiety about which of them was first or best, which one Jesus valued above all others. I expect that some of them thought they deserved that first place. Others were being pressed, perhaps, by family or friends to lay claim to the honor. Still others who may have harbored the secret opinion that their goodness would finally be recognized for what they suspected it really was; you know . . . if you wait for others to name your value you can avoid the BIG small s, capital I, small n . . . and go on appearing as the meek and humble one.

It was truly a command performance night. A new commandment I give you, Jesus said, that you love one another as I have loved you. And do this in remembrance of me, He said. Bewilderment must have elbowed status seeking out of the way for a while at least. What in the world was He talking about? This is my body, this is my blood? A festive meal suddenly gets heavy. The awaited reward for hard going turns into something else. Probably most of you are far wiser than I was when I was a commissioner to General Assembly. A few years back I'd heard that there was to be an assembly held in San Diego and I thought that my presbytery and God could use me as much in San Diego as in the more familiar and less exotic Baltimore or Philadelphia. And so I went to San Diego, ready to do good things for the church and have good things happen to Freda who deserved them . . . and then things got heavy . . . people were wounding and being wounded and it was no longer good enough to be nice and grace was something other than polite listening and smiling . . . and there in the upper room Jesus starts talking about body and blood and showing his death until he comes.

A mystifying command surely but maybe not as bewildering as his washing their feet. Can you feel in your face what must have been registered in their's? In the Gospel of John, the footwashing episode replaces the last supper recorded in the other gospels. Is it because it appears only in John's gospel that we tend to forget this command and remember the others? Or when we do remember it, we tend to remember only the part that asks that we wash each other's feet? I don't want to belittle anyone, including myself, for I suspect that most of us do battle with what it is to love one another in our particular and peculiar worlds. But I also suspect that occasionally we take refuge in a general agreement that the Christian life is marked by service and love and thereby let ourselves off the hook in

terms of the one who happens to be approaching me. As one biblical scholar (Eduard Schweizer) puts it. The love that Jesus speaks of does not give us a principle or law to follow. Jesus takes us, as the twelve were taken, with him on the way so that we learn to live a life that in all of its manifestations takes God more seriously than it takes its own riches or its own need, its own power or its own failures and thereby sees the one approaching, from wherever and whatever, as the one to love.

What do we hear in this portion of John's gospel? What do we see as we enter the room and find in those twelve men something of ourselves? Since all were seeking first place or at least a place of honor, none would consider doing what Jesus finally did. He did the unthinkable. Their teacher and leader knelt down and washed their feet. I think that the Peter in us would cry out too . . . no . . . never. And what would we hear when Jesus says, if I don't wash you, you have no part in me? Probably what Peter heard . . . and we'd probably say what he said, well then, wash all of me. If a little of anything is good, a lot has to be better. But Jesus answers, you are already clean except for your feet. Before Jesus ever tells them to wash one another's feet, He lays aside his garment and washes theirs. I can't imagine that footwashing is such a complicated activity that Jesus did this to teach them how to do it. We don't refrain from doing much that we're called to do simply because we don't know the mechanics of the action . . . no, that wasn't why Jesus did it.

Nor to make them clean . . . but to deal with what were the results of their daily walk . . . dusty, tired feet. Ministering to the scrapes and weariness and scruffiness of where they'd been and what they'd encountered on the highways and narrow paths of that day. The callouses newly hardened, the long-lived-with misshapen toe or arch, the toenail that never goes right . . . the guarding behavior that protects what once was wounded, the habit of always mistrusting those kind or something in our own selves, the wish to be more hospitable that never gets translated into hospitality or sanctuary for them or those. Jesus knelt down and washed their feet, of the weariness of daily responsibility, the scratches of irresponsible colleagues or ungrateful children, the dust of the half-step into infidelity or manipulation or selfishness or compromised integrity. The day's accumulations . . . Jesus knelt and washed these away.

But before He did that, Jesus laid aside his garments. Before He took up the towel . . . the symbol of servanthood, the embarrassing evidence that this savior is indeed the suffering servant . . . before He took up the

towel, Jesus laid aside His garments. When Jesus said you ought to wash one another's feet, that command included the washing, the towel and the laying aside of the garments. Lay aside your garments? Take off this robe? Forget the title? Commissioners, Stated Clerk, Reverend, General Secretary, Moderator, professor, elder, president, chairperson? Take off your garments? Education, degrees, schools, travel, selfmade success, sold the most, walked the farthest, gave the most, most articulate, never borrowed, always paid my own way . . . Take off those protective garments? Jesus laid aside his garments, and taking a towel, knelt and washed the disciples' feet . . . and said, unless I do this to you, you shall have no part of me. After all they'd been through together? All they'd given up? All they'd done and tried to do and understand? After all of that, no part of Him? And it comes before we wash each other's feet. You can't get there to do that before you are here with this happening to you . . . without being here with Jesus, the Christ of God, ministering to us, to what clings to you and to me as we go about doing good . . . the little stuff that we, because we are so busy and can appreciate how busy God

Tom Dunham

must be, can't bother God with . . . the little stuff of the day . . . exposed in all its mundaneness to the only one who can deal with it.

Biblical scholars have evidently pondered over the words, no part of me, for generations. Some see in the words a prophetic word that places the cross at the center of the life of discipleship. Some of you are used to posing that possibility and all of us are quite used to being addressed by it, to having to consider the cost of discipleship. Surely Jesus on the cross speaks many volumes to us. According to a friend and colleague, Daniel Migliore, Jesus' cry from the cross confronts us with the depth of Jesus' solidarity with a Godless world, with one who represents all who cry from the depths of suffering, with one who willingly surrenders himself to the will of God whom Jesus trusted to be ultimately gracious. The cross in this last interpretation is an extreme example of what is commanded of us by the kneeling Jesus who asks not great things of us but hard things to be sure. Jesus' vulnerability in the face of death mirrors what He asks of us in the face of life.

People like us come to places and times like this to be installed, to be elected, to make decisions, to bear rule in the church, to interpret and defend positions, to make sure that what we think is important gets full attention . . . with great zeal to be about God's business . . . and God knows there's a lot of that to do . . . to be doers and not merely hearers of the word. But first Jesus removed his garments and took a towel and washed their feet. Laid aside everything that protected, all that marks one as unique, all that may have served to cover any uncertainty, all that proves how far one has come . . . took up the towel that no one else would lay hold of, that was a symbol with which none wanted to be identified, that would attract only gasps and confusion and blur the lines on the carefully worked out, preserved and comfortable script of life which tells us all how to play our part in the church and in the world . . . knelt and washed their feet . . . their bare and funny looking feet . . . of the grime and dust and wisps of the straw of life, of the stench of walking unfeelingly on the back of another or of moving brutally onto the shaky ground of the life of one trying to keep his or her life together, or through the humanly supported prisons of prejudice and arrogance and power-mongering without a glance at those behind their bars.

That night in the upper room Jesus gave many commands—all with a promise and this one with a gracious act of ministry. Not a command that says you must do this but one that says let me do this for you. You who

will go in my name to wash feet and to carry crosses if they be laid on you, you who will serve and vote and decide . . . you must first come to me as I came to you, with garments laid aside, with all that keeps you from looking silly or unready or unsure laid aside, with all the stuff that you think big folks, real Christians should do for themselves right there . . . and let me wash your feet. Then . . . after that, freed from all else that you count on to see you through, naked and weak and kneeling, then you will be a part of me.

Paul M. Schrock

Incarnation in Hinduism and Christianity

Distinctions between Avatars and Christ

DANIEL E. BASSUK

The book from which this article is excerpted studies 25 god-men and 1 god-woman sent to earth for the purpose of converting evil into good. These god-persons are seen by Hindus as the equivalent of Jesus Christ.

Soul and Sole

Having discussed the most prominent similarites between Avatars and Christ, let us now turn to the differences. First, the Avatars possess a "yogic consciousness." The general Hindu attitude contends that yoga assists in the spiritualization of man so that something God-like may be uncovered in the deepest reaches of the soul, which connects man with the divine. The various types of yoga afford man a means by which to attain transcendent consciousness (samadhi) and become united with God. Hinduism suggests that the individual soul (jivatman) becomes one with the Supreme soul (Paratman) as it rediscovers its true identity. In Hinduism, where the individual enshrines the eternal soul of the universe (Brahman-atman), there are numerous instances where the divine shines forth in a conspicuous manner in Avatars. In Christianity a sole incarnation highlights the divinity enshrined in Jesus.

Unlike the Hindu Avatars, Jesus does not possess a yogic consiousness but rather a theocentric consciousness. Jesus' life was centered entirely upon the being, grace, and demands of God. His entire life was dominated by a total and overwhelming passion for God. It is in Jesus, and Jesus alone, that there is nothing of self to be seen, but solely the ultimate, unconditional love of God. His message, grounded in love, is concerned with the attitudes that people are to have toward God and then toward one another. His teaching is to do the will of God, to follow the way of God, not to become God. In Christianity, God's becoming human nei-

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ther implies that each man and woman can become God, nor does God come to earth for the purpose of divinizing human nature. Rather, in Christianity, Jesus is the unique "son of God," revealed once and for all as the sole locus in human existence where God's revelation and presence are to be found. Hinduism denies the exclusive belief in a sole incarnation, placing its faith in ascending and descending souls that occasionally manifest as Avatars.

The Serpent—Good and Evil

The mythical serpent is conceived of as both poisonous and health-giving. In tribal folklore, various parts of the snake are believed to cure ailments and the serpent itself is the guarantee of health and wholeness. It is the homeopathic treatment that uses poison to cure poison and that views the snake as the one creature capable of overcoming venom. Asclepius, the Greek god of healing, possessed a staff with a serpent coiled around it, and this evolved into the caduceus, a staff with two entwined snakes, the symbol associated with medicine. Likewise, the serpent that was raised by Moses in the desert, was to cure the Hebrews of snake-bite, for the Lord said unto Moses, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live" (Numbers 21:8-9).

A reflection of this harmonious inter-relation is found today on a popular level in the village of Shirala in southwestern India, where the cobra is worshipped and celebrated at a serpent festival. The people of Shirala live in perfect harmony with the cobras. They view cobras as symbols of Shiva and his generative power; therefore, the women feed and worship the cobras in the hope that they will be fertile. The villagers believe that Shiva offered one of their ancient sages a boon. The sage asked that his people be protected for all times against the cobras so common in their fields. The boon was granted, and ever since the people of Shirala have believed that they have nothing to fear from the cobra, emblem of the god himself. The cobra has received the epithet *Nulla Pambu*, the "good snake," and nobody is ever bitten there. A similar attitude is found on the fictitious island of Pala, where an Oriental child says, "snakes are your brothers; snakes have a right to your compassion and your respect; snakes, in a word, are good, good, good." When the Western visitor insists that "snakes are also poisonous, poisonous, poisonous," the child re-

plies, "but if you remember that they're just as good as they're poisonous, and act accordingly, they won't use their poison."

In the Western tradition the serpent stands for chaos, evil, death, and the forces of destruction, and it must be conquered and cut to pieces in order that the cosmos may survive. The basis of serpent lore in the Judeo-Christian tradition has its origin in the Garden of Eden. This serpent has become associated in the Western mind with disobedience, evil, sin . . .

Mythologist Joseph Campbell explains the goddesses and their serpents were strongly associated with early agricultural civilizations. When the Semitic people invaded the neighbouring farming tribes, they initiated a struggle between their masculine deity and the various goddesses whose symbol of life and rebirth was the serpent. In many traditions there occurred a merging of the two, e.g. Zeus married the goddesses of some of the neighbouring civilizations and cohabitated with numerous nymphs and wives. But in the Hebraic tradition there was no such marriage. The goddess was viewed as an abomination, and associated with her was her symbol of life, the serpent. The patriarchal accent of the Bible includes a degradation of the imagery associated with the goddess and the serpent. According to Campbell, "the Bible is the only tradition where the serpent is condemned and regarded as absolutely evil."

The serpent as an image of evil appears in both Old and New Testaments. The Isrealites began to worship the fiery bronze serpent that Moses had made, calling it Nehushtan. It is likely that Nehushtan was the name of a snake deity associated with a form of Canaan's Baal religion. Hezekiah, king of Judea, called it "a thing of brass," and destroyed it (II Kings 18:4). Later the prophet Isaiah asked God, "was it not thou that didst cut Rahab in pieces, that didst pierce the dragen?" (Isaiah 51:9-11). And Jesus called the Pharisees serpents and vipers destined for hell (Matt. 23:33). In the book of Revelation, "that ancient serpent who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him . . . and when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had borne the male child" (Rev. 12:9, 13). The serpent imagery in the Bible culminates in the cross on Golgotha which pins the serpent's head and holds chaos and sin in check. Mary, the mother of Jesus, is often portrayed standing upon the serpent, symbolizing how she and her son have conquered sin. . . .

Reincarnation and Resurrection

The traditions of Hinduism and Christianity differ in their conception of life after death. Avatars conceive of life after death in terms of reincarnation while Jesus thought of it as resurrection. The Indian idea of reincarnation implies that a soul comes back to earth in one of 8 million possible reincarnations and chooses a human body either because it hasn't fully learned the lessons it was supposed to or because, in the case of a highly spiritual person, it has a special task to perform in helping others. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, God makes his appearance in the context of reincarnation, for it is stated:

For Me have passed many
Births, and for thee, Arjuna;
These I know all;
Thou knowest not, scorcher of the foe.
For protection of the good,
And for destruction of evil-doers,
To make a firm footing for the right,
I come into being in age after age.
(*Bhagavad Gita, IV.5,8*)

The modern Indian Avatars proclaim that the soul reincarnates in accordance with the divine will, entering into a mortal body and transcending karma. Meher Baba and Satya Sai Baba claimed that they had been Jesus Christ in a previous life, and Ramakrishna informed two of his disciples that they had been apostles of Jesus, all this in accordance with a belief in reincarnation.

The notion of reincarnation is foreign to the New Testament and to Jesus. The Jew of Jesus' day and the early Christians were concerned with the resurrection of the dead and not with reincarnation. The early Christians expected the imminent end of the world, probably within their own lifetimes, and they believed that Jesus would soon return to raise the dead and establish this kingdom on earth. They believed that they were living in the final moment of the present age, and for this they were more concerned with living their lives so that they would be ready for Jesus' second coming and with the repentence of their sins than they were with what happened to the soul after death. They also believed there would be a general resurrection of the dead at the second coming of Jesus.

The goal in Hinduism is to be released from reincarnation, and a negative value is placed on preserving individuality after death. Westerners, on the other hand, generally wish to survive after death as individuals, and resurrection entails a revivification with the same body and soul that the person formerly possessed. According the Christian belief the resurrection of Jesus Christ demonstrates his victory over death, and the New Testament reports that during his lifetime Jesus raised three people from the dead: Lazarus (John 11:1-44), a widow's son (Luke 7:11-17), and Jarius' daughter (Mark 5:35-43 and Luke 8:49-56). Matthew records that at the time of Jesus' crucifixion "the tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many" (Matthew 27:52-53). The New Testament also says that between his resurrection and his ascension Jesus made eleven appearances within 40 days to more than 525 people, but in no sense is this a case of reincarnation as with the Avatars.

On occasion, the association of Jesus with reincarnation has been based upon the statement in the Fourth Gospel that he who believes in Christ "has everlasting life" (John 3:36). Everlasting life is an idea to which the author of the Fourth Gospel loves to allude, and it permeates his gospel. However, everlasting life is not synonymous with reincarnation, and Jesus never refers to the reincarnation of his, or any other individual's soul. Reincarnation of a soul falls with the tradition of Hinduism, while resurrection of the body and soul is clearly in the province of Judeo-Christianity.

Baba and Abba

Beginning with Ramakrishna in the late 19th century, the Avatars have proclaimed their divinity. Avatar Meher Baba was adamant, insisting that he was "the Highest of the High" and the "Avatar of the Age." For the Avatars, Lord Krishna looms in the background as the divine progenitor, and beyond Krishna, in the primordial past is Vishnu. Modern Avatars emphasize their divinity through a wealth of mythic themes such as a divine colour, the royal serpent, a miraculous birth and suffering, death, disciples, powers, omnipotence and apocalyptic expectation. As an actual manifestation of the diety they encourage mankind to love them as Baba, the Father.

We encounter three Babas among Hindu Avatars, Meher Baba, Satya Sai Baba, and Babaji (alias Hariakhan Baba). The word Baba means father, and so the Avatar stands for paternity in some sense. The names Meher Baba and Satya Sai Baba are theophoric names and not birth-names and point to the Avatar's paternal role. The Avatar Babaji, who is the original Kriya Avatar according to Yogananda, strikes one as mythic, comparable to the Rama Avatar. His miraculous nature—immortal, doesn't need food, speaks all languages, astral travel, invisibility, and non-material body—gives an overwhelming impression that he is a mythic embodiment, and his name Babaji represents his fathering of the Kirya Avata lineage. Thus the use of the name Baba among Hindu Avatars describes a function, i.e., serving in the role of father, rather than a thing.

With Jesus Christ it is different. He used the Aramaic word "Abba," meaning father, to refer to God the father rather than to himself. The gospels record the word "Abba" upon the lips of Jesus at least 170 times. Jesus calls upon, and points to, Abba, the father in heaven, in the tender way that a child addresses its father, similar perhaps to our word "Daddy." Among his most famous words were "Our Father (Abba) who art in heaven hallowed be thy name" (Luke 11:2), and his last words, "Father (Abba), into thy hands I commit my spirit" (Luke 23:46). Even the statement in the Gospel of John "He who has seen me has seen the Father," does not obfuscate the distinction between Jesus and the heavenly Father. Jesus' use of "Abba" establishes a filial relationship between the Father in heaven and the son here on earth. Baba, on the other hand, points to the role of father that the Avatar himself assumes. The letters "a" and "b" can be combined to spell either the Hindu word Baba or the Aramaic word Abba, but between the two conceptions of father there is a world of difference.

Hindu Love and Christian Love

The God-men of India are beacons of love, inspiring humanity with the signal and radiance of blissful love. The love which the Avatars profess is known in India as *bhakti*, and Krishna revealed its importance in the Gita two thousand years ago. *Bhakti* is at the heart of Hindu theistic religion. The emotion that *bhakti* elicits is a mixture of awe, fascination, love, and dependence. *Bhakti*, more than any other term, expresses the Hindu attitude toward the deity, and an accurate translation of *bhakti* is

"devotional faith." *Bhakti* implies the taking of refuge in God for protection, for assistance, or for special benefits, with confidence that God is approachable and that He will reciprocate with at least as much love as the devotee has for Him.

Bhakti can be interpreted as "love," but it is a type of love that is based upon devotion to a beloved deity and in which there is a separation between the devotee and his God. There is in *bhakti* an emphasis on the relationship between lover and beloved, and the various aspects of *bhakti* are viewed as stages of spiritual progress. Hindu *bhakti* also involves a separation between God's surrogate, the Avatar, and man. The intimacy of love between the two never erases the distinction, even though they may become united through their love. It is an emotion that separates the subject and the object, man and his God. Both are personal; one is the finite *bhakta*, the other is the infinite *Bhagavan* (Loved One, God).

Bhakti may be translated as "love," but it is understood to be the loving attitude of the devotee for God or the Avatar. *Bhakti* is always seen from the side of the devotee, therefore it is somewhat inaccurate to equate this with the Christian concept of love, which is primarily the attitude that God takes toward the creation. Christian love corresponds more appropriately to the Hindu concepts of *prasada* (grace), *karuna* (mercy), or *vatsalya* (protecting and forgiving love), than to *bhakti*. The direction of the love is essentially toward God or Baba in Hinduism and from God or Abba in Christianity.

The scholar Claude Montefiore pointed out some years ago that Christianity presents a picture of God who not only receives those who turn to Him, but who takes the initiative in seeking those who have not yet turned to Him. This is the image of the divine shepherd going into the wilderness to seek a lost sheep, and this differs from the Hindu image of a flock of sheep seeking guidance from the shepherd. Abba, the Christian God, loves to save; Babba, the Hindu Avatar, saves who love.

The Eightfold Path

CHÖGYAM TRUNGPA

There seem to be so many sidetracks in relating to our life-situations, sidetracks of all kinds by which we are seduced: "Food, gas and lodging, next exit." We are always promised something if we turn right at the next exit as we travel down our highway. There are so many colorful advertisements. We never want to be just where and what we are; we always want to be somewhere else. We can always turn right at the next exit, even though we really know we are stuck on our highway anyway, that we really have no choice about it. Where we are is embarrassing, and so we would like to hear somebody say that there is an alternative whereby we do not have to be ashamed of ourselves: "I'll provide a mask, just put it on." Then you can get off at that exit and you are "saved" by pretending to be what you are not. You think people see you as a different person, the one wearing the mask of what you would like to be.

Buddhism promises nothing. It teaches us to be what we are where we are, constantly, and it teaches us to relate to our living situations accordingly. That seems to be the way to proceed on our highway without being distracted by the sidetracks and exits of all kinds. The signs say . . . "Japanese Village, next exit," "Nirvana, next exit"; Enlightenment, next exit-instant one"; "Disneyland, next exit." If you turn right, everything is going to be OK. You get what you are promised. But after having gone to Disneyland or having taken part in the Nirvana Festival, then you have to think about how you are going to get back to your car, how you are going to get home. This means you have to get back on the highway once more. It is unavoidable. I am afraid that this portrays our basic situation, the process in which we are constantly involved.

I am sorry not to be presenting any glamorous and beautiful promises. Wisdom happens to be a domestic affair. Buddha saw the world as it is and that was his enlightenment. "Buddha" means "awake," being awake,

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completely awake—that seems to be his message to us. He offered us a path to being awake, a path with eight points, and he called it "the eightfold path."

The first point the Buddha made has to do with "right view." Wrong view is a matter of conceptualization. Someone is walking toward us—suddenly we freeze. Not only do we freeze ourselves, but we also freeze the space in which the person is walking toward us. We call him "friend" who is walking through this space or "enemy." Thus the person is automatically walking through a frozen situation of fixed ideas—"this is that," or "this is not that." This is what Buddha called "wrong view." It is a conceptualized view which is imperfect because we do not see the situation as it is. There is the possibility, on the other hand of not freezing that space. The person could walk into a lubricated situation of myself and that person as we are. Such a lubricated situtation can exist and can create open space.

Of course, openness could be appropriated as a philosophical concept as well, but the philosophy need not necessarily be fixed. The situation could be seen without the idea of lubrication as such, without any fixed idea. In other words, the philosophical attitude could be just to see the situation as it is. "That person walking toward me is not a friend, therefore he is not an enemy either. He is just a person approaching me. I don't have to prejudge him at all." That is what is called "right view."

The next aspect of the eightfold path is called "right intention." Ordinary intention is based upon the process we have just described. Having conceptually fixed the person, now you are ready either to grasp or attack him. Automatically there is an apparatus functioning to provide either a waterbed or a shotgun for that person. That is the intention. It is a thought process which relates thinking to acting. When you encounter a situation, you think; and thinking inclines toward acting. In your constant alertness to relate the situation to your security, the intention is working between two jaws. The emotional element, concerned with pleasure or pain, expansion or withdrawal, is one jaw; the heavy physical aspect of the situation is the other. Situations keep you chewing your intention constantly, like gristle. Intention always has the quality of either invitation or attack.

But according to Buddha there is also "right intention." In order to see what this is, we first must understand what Buddha meant by "right." He did not mean to say right as opposed to wrong at all. He said "right"

meaning "what is," being right without a concept of what is right. "Right" translates the Sanskrit *samyak*, which means "complete." Completeness needs no relative help, no support through comparison; it is self-sufficient. Samyak means seeing life as it is without crutches, straightforwardly. In a bar one says, "I would like a straight drink." Not diluted with club soda or water; you just have it straight. That is samyak, no dilutions, no concoctions—just a straight drink. Buddha realized that life could be potent and delicious, positive and creative, and he realized that you do not need any concoctions with which to mix it. Life is a straight drink—hot pleasure, hot pain, straightforward, one hundred percent.

So right intention means not being inclined toward anything other than what is. You are not involved in the idea that life could be beautiful or could be painful, and you are not being careful about life. According to Buddha, life *is* pain, life *is* pleasure. That is the samyak quality of it—so precise and direct: straight life without any concoctions. There is no need at all to reduce life situations or intensify them. Pleasure as it is, pain as it is—these are the absolute qualities of Buddha's approach to intention.

The third aspect of the eightfold path is "right speech." In Sanskrit the word for speech is *vac*, which means "utterance," "word" or "logos." It implies perfect communication which says, "It is so," rather than, "I think it is so." "Fire is hot," rather than "I think fire is hot." Fire *is* hot, automatically—the direct approach. Such communication is true speech, in Sanskirt *satya*, which means "being true." It is dark outside at this time. Nobody would disagree with that. Nobody would have to say, "I think it is dark outside," or, "You must believe it is dark outside." You would just say, "It is dark outside." It is just the simple minimum of words we could use. It is true.

The fourth aspect of the eightfold path is "right morality" or "right discipline." If there is no one to impose discipline and no one to impose discipline on, then there is no need for discipline in the ordinary sense at all. This leads to the understanding of right discipline, complete discipline, which does not exist relative to ego. Ordinary discipline exists only at the level of relative decisions. If there is a tree, there must be branches; however, if there is no tree, there are no such things as branches. Likewise, if there is no ego, a whole range of projections becomes unnecessary. Right discipline is that kind of giving-up process; it brings us into complete simplicity.

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We are all familiar with the samsaric kind of discipline which is aimed at self-improvement. We give up all kinds of things in order to make ourselves "better," which provides us with tremendous reassurance that we can do something with our lives. Such forms of discipline are just unnecessarily complicating your life rather than trying to simplify and live the life of a *rishi*.

"Rishi" is a Sanskrit word which refers to the person who constantly leads a straightforward life. The Tibetan word for "rishi" is *trangsong (drang sron)*. *Trang* means "direct," *song* means "upright." The term refers to one who leads a direct and upright life by not introducing new complications into his life-situation. This is a permanent discipline, the ultimate discipline. We simplify life rather than get involved with new gadgets or finding new concoctions with which to mix it.

The fifth point is "right livelihood." According to Buddha, right livelihood simply means making money by working, earning dollars, pounds, francs, pesos. To buy food and pay rent you need money. This is not a cruel imposition on us. It is a natural situation. We need not be embarrassed by dealing with money nor resent having to work. The more energy you put out, the more you get in. Earning money involves you in so many related situations that it permeates your whole life. Avoiding work usually is related to avoiding other aspects of life as well.

People who reject the materialism of American society and set themselves apart from it are unwilling to face themselves. They would like to comfort themselves with the notion that they are leading philosophically virtuous lives, rather than realizing that they are unwilling to work with the world as it is. We cannot expect to be helped by divine beings. If we adopt doctrines which lead us to expect blessings, then we will not be open to the real possibilities in situations. Buddha believed in cause and effect. For example, you get angry at your friend and decide to cut off the relationship. You have a hot argument with him and walk out of the room and slam the door. You catch your finger in the door. Painful, isn't it? That is cause and effect. You realize there is some warning there. You have overlooked karmic necessity. It happens all the time. This is what we run into when we violate right livelihood.

The sixth point is "right effort." The Sanskrit, *samyaguyayama*, means energy, endurance, exertion. This is the same as the bodhisattva's principle of energy. There is no need to be continually just pushing along,

drudging along. If you are awake and open in living situations, it is possible for them and you to be creative, beautiful, humorous and delightful. This natural openness is right effort, as opposed to any old effort. Right effort is seeing a situation precisely as it is at that very moment, being present fully, with delight, with a grin. There are occasions when we know we are present, but we do not really want to commit ourselves, but right effort involves full participation.

For right effort to take place we need gaps in our discursive or visionary gossip, room to stop and be present. Usually, someone is whispering some kind of seduction, some gossip behind our back; "It's all very well to meditate, but how about going to the movies? Meditating is nice, but how about getting together with our friends? How about that? Shall we read that book? Maybe we should go to sleep? Shall we go buy that thing we want? Shall we? Shall we? Shall we? Discursive thoughts constantly happening, numerous suggestions constantly being supplied—effort has no room to take place. Or maybe it is not discursive thoughts at all. Sometimes it is a continual vision of possibilities: "My enemy is coming and I'm hitting him—I want war." Or, "My friend is coming, I'm hugging him, welcoming him to my house, giving him hospitality." It goes on all the time. "I have a desire to eat lambchops—no, leg of lamb, steak, lemon ice cream. We could go to that Mexican restaurant and get tacos 'to go' and bring them back home. We'll dip them in the sauce and eat together and have a nice philosophical discussion as we eat. Nice to do that with candlelight and soft music." We are constantly dreaming of infinite possibilities for all kinds of entertainment. There is no room to stop, no room to start providing space. Providing space: effort, non-effort and effort, non-effort—it's very choppy in a sense, very precise, knowing how to release the discursive or visionary gossip. Right effort—it's beautiful.

The next one is "right mindfulness." Right mindfulness does not simply mean being aware; it is like creating a work of art. There is more spaciousness in right mindfulness than in right effort. If you are drinking a cup of tea, you are aware of the whole environment as well as the cup of tea. You can therefore trust what you are doing, you are not threatened by anything. You have room to dance in the space, and this makes it a creative situation. The space is open to you.

The eighth aspect of the eightfold path is "right samadhi," right ab-

sorption. Samadhi has the sense of being as it is, which means relating with the space of a situation. This pertains to one's living situation as well as to sitting meditation. Right absorption is being completely involved, thoroughly and fully, in a non-dualistic way. In sitting meditation the technique and you are one; in life situation the phenomenal world is also part of you. Therefore you do not have to meditate as such, as though you were a person distinct from the act of meditating and the object of meditation. If you are one with the living situation as it is, your meditation just automatically happens.

The Uniqueness of Sufism

K.M.P. MOHAMED CASSIM

At a time when spiritual liberation has become a forgotten value, Sufism explains that the agony of unsatisfactoriness in life is mainly due to uncontrolled attachment to sensual objects. The modern person is looking for liberation from a deeper disease than just the eradication of ignorance, sickness or poverty. It can be seen clearly that there are many who are not happy in spite of the fact that they are educated, healthy and rich. Therefore, there is a more radical sickness in the heart of man and this internal disorder is a greater barrier to happiness and peace of mind than any external form of misery. It is this mental sickness from which man is earnestly yearning to be liberated. Sufism states that instead of living in suffering or sadness man can experience undying joy if only the craving of attachments could be eliminated. In a nutshell Sufism is basically a spiritual technique of mental detachment from the objects of the sense which could be practised by all.

Sufism emphasizes that to attain the perfect state of calmness we must understand ourselves as we are from moment to moment without the process of psychological accumulation. In approaching the problem of life we should not be conditioned by any preconceived ideas or theories. If our minds are conditioned by various concepts and views we will not be able to perceive the Reality. Since life presents to us every moment a new challenge, to respond rightly we must be free from all patterns of past thinking. We should not aim at anything other than to live in the present without creating confusions and complications, because by dwelling on the past we fail to live in the present and by thinking of the future we escape from present problems. Hence, to live in the present in perfect peace we need a new method of self-discipline by which to use our minds in a different way so that it frees us from all the conditioning to which we have been psychologically subjected. We must learn the art of relinquishing every experience effortlessly because clinging to a past experience even lightly is a bondage. Only by living in the timeless present can we make a fresh beginning every moment.

Sufism states that we should not blame others for our sufferings since

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problems exist in our minds. Until and unless we understand the mind we will not be able to solve or face any problem that life brings. What is the mind? Mind is a bundle of thoughts. We see many objects in the physical world. After seeing them our desire is to possess them, because through the contact of these objects or things our minds derive certain sensations and pleasure. In life we come across many people, ideas and things. Among them we like some and dislike others. So in our contacts our minds operate with these previous impressions of attractions and repulsions which we have gathered in day-to-day affairs. Thereby the mind has lost its capacity to see anything as it is without the projections of the likes and dislikes into it. To understand our minds we must have the ability to observe how the mind operates in direct relationship to any incident in life. If we can see anything that occurs in daily life without the screens of likes and dislikes then we may be able to solve many problems. It is an interesting question to ask ourselves or rather to find out the source from which our minds originate. In deep meditation alone we can discover how the mind comes into existence. The mind is nothing but a collection of accumulated desires that function by the association of the physical world through the senses. The conscious mind is what we use in our everyday waking life which includes perception, imagination, memories and concepts. The unconscious mind contains not only the memories of everything that has ever happened to us but also includes our biological, racial and family heritage as well as the painful experiences of the past, mostly those of our early childhood.

Sufism insists that we must understand the mystery of death and in discovering the secret of death what is important is not the manifestation of the physical body or the dissolution of it, but the experience of death while we are living. In other words if our minds can be put into a state of death with full awareness then only we can experience the inner meaning of death and this experience of death while living with the physical body will open the door to the eternal state of spiritual liberation. Self-realization consists in discovering the bliss that comes after the cessation of our mental activities. Therefore, we must die every minute not only to enjoy life but also to understand the entire layers of our mind. At death we discover divinity and realize Reality.

The purpose of Sufism is not a mere search for the Truth but its uniqueness lies in the realization of Reality as an immediate experience in the midst of our day-to-day activities. The practices and disciplines that

are advocated in Sufism are intended to bring the mind of the seeker to a state of poise and steadiness because without having attained the state of mental steadiness and calmness the seeker will find it difficult to follow the art of meditation. Needless to say, an uncontrolled mind is spiritually a liability, never an asset, it is important for the spiritual seeker to have a refined and calm state of mind. Discipline in all phases of life is absolutely essential. What we need is a philosophy of right action and right living. Sufism does not encourage the attitude of running away from the family and business responsibilities to achieve the goal of God-Realization. It is to be thoroughly understood that mere physical isolation from anything will never bring mental liberation. Our minds are the major cause of creating various conflicts and confusions. Further, it is impossible to run away from our own mental problems because to whatever place we may go we carry them with us. Detachment is purely an internal state of mind when we do not cling to anything. In order to achieve the state of meditation we need not renounce the world but we must understand the mind and go beyond it to attain the Reality. The most fundamental fact that we must realize is that nothing in the world can give us real happiness other than the profound state of perfect peace.

Sufism declares the highest goal of man as realization of the Truth. Since most of the time we are just drifting, tossed around by the feelings of past of future, by anxieties, hopes, fears, hate and anger, our thoughts and actions are not in harmony and they produce mental conflicts of various sorts. All spiritual efforts aim at stilling the mind so as to overcome the illusion of our own psychic individuality. When the mind is still, we rise beyond sense perception and enter into a transcendental state of consciousness where thoughts cannot penetrate—a free state of choiceless and blissful awareness. Meditation actually means that we have transcended thoughts or conquered the mind and in such a meditative state there is no need to seek more. Through self discipline, devotion, and perseverance alone, can self-slavery be transmuted into self mastery leading to effortlessness in meditation.

Sufism says that the more inwardly silent we can be the more dynamic and effective action is possible in the society in which we live. When the mind is silent it has a tremendous impact not only on our environment, but also it transforms in the divine direction of unconditioning one's mind. When the illusory veil of ignorance is removed, the ever present truth is revealed as it is. It is to be realized that this ignorance consists in

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the false identification of the Truth with the body and the mind. Throughout the ages the indispensability of spiritual discipline has been greatly stressed because we are ignorant of our blissful state of Truth. Attempts are always directed only to eradicate the ignorance which veils the purity of bliss.

From the mystical stand-point of Sufism we have never ceased to be the Divinity, but it is not enough to understand and assert this state intellectually or verbally. It is very essential that such self-realization must stand the test of experience under all circumstances. One must retain one's equanimity under the greatest pressure and danger even in the face of death. Sufism says that the grace of Allah always is. The problem is whether we are receiving it. The moment we see how transient, ever changing and irrelevant our thoughts and feelings are, we start dissociating ourselves from our mental mechanism, and then we turn to meditative awareness by which we experience or contact the ever-present grace of Allah.

Sufism insists that what we must change is not the externals in which we ourselves are immersed or even the people around us, but we ourselves, which means our mental make-up and consciousness. We must shift the centre of gravity from the outside world to within ourselves. Whatever pain may be involved in the shape of ups and downs in the process of gaining control over the mind must be accepted happily. It is very necessary that we maintain mental equilibrium under all circumstances. Without it we cannot expect substantial progress in our spiritual life. When a seeker achieves atonement with Allah he attains liberation. In other words Sufism says that life under the guidance of divine understanding of Reality is freedom, and the disharmony with Divinity owing to failure of insight into it is bondage. Liberation is therefore no escape or flight from Reality, but an actual incorporation of oneself into Reality.

It is futile to expect any spiritual progress before having purified the mind and thus make oneself fit for the arduous journey to the Truth. A seeker is one to whom the spiritual urge is very powerful and one does not worry over anything but simply strives because one is drawn to the higher life. For the seeker effort is very necessary, but we must remember that effort alone can never secure the final goal of self realization because one who makes the effort must dissolve in the divine process leaving all to the grace of Allah. The essence of humanity is pure being, but the mind creates an ego which, although illusory, seems to be real. This state of ignorance has to be removed, because this false ego is the main obstruction to the realization of Reality. The ego is a seat of emotions and lower animal passions like greed, anger, lust and jealousies.

Sufism stresses that no spiritual development is possible if the mind is colored by previous ideas or motivated in a particular desire. Therefore, an aspirant must have a well disciplined mind which observes facts objectively without prejudices, as the mind which turns to look upon anything with preconceived ideas cannot see properly. We are unable to find out the truth about life because our minds are blinded by the bundle of wrong notions and fixed conclusions we have about ourselves and other people and things. In meditation we try to put aside everything including our names and forms, memories and psychological reactions. Then we realise there is a self which is unidentifiable. It has no characteristic or label on which we can place our finger. It is to be realized that self-discovery is neither idle reverie nor vacant in-action, but an intense inner ecstasy and liberation with enlightenment. Self-realization is not something new to

be achieved, but an eternally existent state to be discovered by throwing our whole life into spiritual practice.

The technique of Sufistic disciplines cannot be understood until they are lived and have become a part of us and we acquire the ability to use them rightly in our daily activities. The Sufistic method of realizing Reality is purely an internal experience, in which one would detach from one's own mind, because the mind is the real cause of all the worries and tribulations. Hence, Sufism emphasizes more and more the way of eradicating the impressions that are rooted in the mind, by means of silent meditation. The chief aim of a Sufi is not only to liberate his mind from the worldly entanglement but also to transcend it and thus attune himself to Allah-awareness of the Divine presence.

The present day is a time of extraordinary achievement of fantastic discoveries in every field. All the knowledge in the world will not make us wise unless we learn the divine art of meditation. The state of meditation cannot be described by the mind because it takes place in a realm which is beyond the mind. For a person who has not experienced the highest state of meditation, doubt may arise with regard to the state which is beyond the mind, and may wonder what there is to accomplish in the absence of mind. Here it is to be realized that we are not mere mental instruments in the blind activities of our minds. The Sufi is a person who is thoroughly established in Allah, who has no trace of ignorance, who is completely illumined and one who has direct wisdom of Divinity and consequent understanding of the world process. He appears in the world of ignorance as a beacon of light dispelling the darkness. He is fully integrated in the perfect realization of the fundamental unity which sustains the whole of Reality.

Lifeline to Awakening

EMILY SARGENT COUNCILMAN

Late in March that year ago, the Grieving One, walking in the forest and faltering under the burden of long-carried loss, came upon the dogwood tree.

From a distance it appeared to be one huge mass of layered cloud hovering closely over a slender column of gray. Finding herself standing near to the tree, then underneath it, the Grieving One dimly discerned countless layers of four-petaled blossoms, multiplied and multiplied, and securely attached to the tree.

The Grieving One sat down, leaned wearily against the sturdy trunk, and heard herself speaking to the tree. "Dogwood, how can you bear it? They call your blossoms 'Resurrection Flowers,' but I see, on your petals, only rusty stains of blood on a crown of thorns."

Silent, the tree—its fullness wide and high above the Grieving One. No breeze stirred to dry her suddenly loosed tears. She sat down, pressing her body hard against the tree, her arms folded, head bowed. But she stayed there, not knowing why. In some strange way she felt at home. (Or perhaps she was too tired to move away?) She stayed . . . and stayed until she began to hear the silence.

Early in April, the Grieving Once found again the dogwood tree in the forest and discovered that its mass of blossoms was coming apart, petal by petal, and almost covering the ground.

She began to feel the warming sun on her back and a gentle breeze enfolding her. At home again? She stood very still beneath its wide branches and the soft, free-falling petals. Some of them even interrupted their downward flight to brush lightly her almost-looking-up face. Tentatively, she held out her hands to them. Finally she did look up, and speak again to the tree.

"Dogwood, tell me about death." And she stood there, quietly waiting.

The wind stirred, hastening the petals' fall. They showered the earth with their silent passing. More and more of them included the Grieving One in their fragile touch until, again looking up, she could clearly see the intricate shape of the tree now bare of blossoms, its trunk standing tall and strong with its pattern of interwoven branches and twigs letting in pieces of sky. Then she saw what she had not noticed before—budding

leaves just beginning to unfold their tender green near to where the blossoms had flowered. She saw the tree reaching up and out, through trunk and branch and stem, to its new growth of foliage emerging.

Beginning to awaken, she knelt down among the scattered petals on the ground—some white, tinged with earth-brown and some already faded into amber—or dried and shrunken.

Carefully holding some of the gathered petals—all kinds of them—in her hands, she spoke again to the tree. "Dogwood, tell me about life." Then she waited until she began to hear the silence from the unseen roots beneath her—strong roots for surviving summer drought and winter blast and, when time is full, for reaching up and out through pulsing veins to trunk and branch and stem, to blossoms and leaves . . . to sky.

Laughing and crying, all at the same time, she sprang up from the ground, released remaining petals from her open hands and found herself running out of the forest toward home. She ran freely, rhythmically; lightly bearing within herself the Silence and her singing heart-words:

"Now loss,
Now life,
Now Love.
God, I thank You."

Eilc

O God, guide of the universe
thank you.

Your seasons are infinite
and numbered as galaxies and stars
strewn like seed in the emptiness, moving
as music moves
in cycles and scales along the answering registry
of our being.

Your sentences bring the fall of leaves and light,
the cool of autumn and evening, the relief
of dimming before full dark and dawn,
the profusion of summer and noon.
Each thing that is has its place, each moment
its position in the sequence.
Harmony and consummation share your spaciousness,
binding us gently to each other, summing all that is,
seen and unseen, and all that has been
forever.

In this kindly design,
our smallest particles dance like graceful planets
in formation around the sun.
All things are echoing a common shapeliness and pattern,
sounding the chimes of shared number and discretion.
We are not alone,
Time holds our hand at such quiet beating moments.

Anywhere we remember the way the roots of trees reflect
the branches, as our thoughts rise and fall
along synapse and branching cells, we will see

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how darkness points the light to stars and nightfall
signals coming day. Moving time is a reflection
of all embodiment. You are our source.

Like a brother and sister raised in carefulness,
like the man and woman, their parents who show them the way
to be together, everything takes turns. We are made new,
every Sabbath our souls, every seven years our cells and selves,
as each evening evens out our watchfulness to rest and ease.

How can we thank you enough?
To know these things is to rejoice in the answer you give everywhere,
the responsiveness of all the universe which is love, yours,
our guide, God, our code itself that knits opposites to wholeness
in love, which is ours to reflect and reflect upon.

Elizabeth Anne Socolow
10/11/84

ACROSS THE BLUE COLD

Healing is as personal as the smell of a robe
or a flower belonging to someone no lónger alive.
And in that fading even of fragrance,
in the getting fainter comes the remembrance,
strength crowding out lack, more life
pushing like snow into the bare branches.

Healing comes of touch filling in where remembrance
gives vacancy, the sensation of a dream lost to sleep,
a country with no map and no boundaries
suddenly found again.
Voice gathers itself from the silence,
lifting song from sorrow.

Healing knows the past was kind
at moments, comforting as a storm
breaking summer heat, wise
as bathing after a marathon, massage, and sleep.
And the hands that perform kind offices,

the people who were summoned in trouble
and flew to emergency, the companionable few
there for the long press of daily exertion: these heal.

Healing knows the 'once-was' kept out the cold drafts,
kept the brittle rattle from shaking the house-frames.
To stand here, together, means to know frostbite
and the bitter pain of thawing. Across the blue cold
that afflicts flesh itself, to reach toward remembered
warmth. It is to know everyone has been this cold,
or colder. Everyone has known this torment
and the pulse of being touched by affection.

It is so fine to be who we are, each different, welcomed
in appreciation. There is such a gap
between replaceable
and interchangeable.
The parakeet does not truly stand in for the lost child.

This is the way of grief and loss of the body:
the present, *there*, tremulous
as a log in the high flame, going
shakes us, as trees shake, losing leaves,
losing mass and shade, as the clouds shake,
giving up rain and snow.
In that trembling, the throat opens
as a sounding box to the wail, the cry at loss.
The throat opens to know again
how every ligament joins the body to itself.

Here we are connected and at home.
And home is where the bodies are that can absorb
the shaking. Home is where the bodies are that heal.

Elizabeth Anne Socolow
12/86

Not Alone: "A Transforming Experience"

CAROLYN WHITMORE SHILLING

"Tests indicate possible malignancy. An operation is urgent." These words put me in a state of panic. What would be found? How much pain would there be? How would I cope? I felt so alone. I had no idea of how to maneuver my way through this new, unwanted experience.

But that night I had a dream. It reminded me of the title of John Sanford's book, *Dreams: God's Forgotten Language*, and had such a powerful impact on my life that I want to share it with you. I call it "the rainbow canoe dream."

I arrived at the edge of a lake and found a wooden rowboat and a green canoe. I was about to choose the latter when I saw behind it a rainbow canoe. I was delighted, because I love rainbows, and soon was happily paddling along in the rainbow canoe. How beautiful it was!

Suddenly, however, when I was very far from shore, threatening clouds appeared, and the sky became ominously dark. What should I do? I was extremely frightened. I was too far from shore to get back, and I did not want to go into the storm. Things seemed to be closing in. Panic.

Just then a burst of light—friendly and warm—appeared in the bow of the canoe, and became my "Friend of Light." I found myself pouring out to this Friend my feelings of panic, of being so alone, so inadequate, not knowing what to do. (Weren't these the same feelings I'd felt at the dreaded medical news?) Then a deep, strong voice came forth from the bow of the rainbow canoe and my Friend of Light said:

"YOU DO NOT HAVE TO BE AFRAID. YOU ARE NOT ALONE, FOR I AM WITH YOU."

My heart began to sing. What joy! What comfort! What relief! What peace!

But just then, I heard rapids in the distance. Which I had never experienced. Again from my depths I poured out my distress, saying "I don't know how to control a canoe in rapids. I don't know how to maneuver." (I had never been faced with an operation before, though I was 56 years old.)

Then unexpectedly, right in the center of the burst of light appeared three letters, "H. I. O." H. I. O.! Of course! Hand it over. Why hadn't I thought of that! These are the letters that my prayer-mate, Betty, and I

often use to remind each other to turn over to God any difficult situation that we can't handle. I realized that I needed God's help. And as I acknowledged that, my Friend of Light suddenly changed positions from the bow of the boat to the stern. My Friend was now in the control seat of the boat, and I was in the bow. Less skill was required of me here, though I would still have to continue paddling.

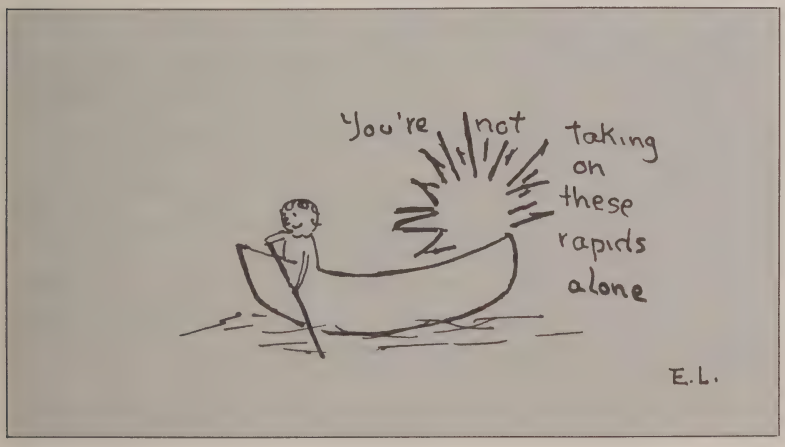
I awoke from this dream with the Good News resounding in my ears and in my heart: "You do not have to be afraid. You are not alone, for I am with you." My sense of God's loving presence was fresh and renewed, and I knew that Loving Light would guide and "maneuver" me through the coming rapids. Which it did.

. . . . .

But there is more! The Sunday after my dream, I shared the dream with my Senior High Seminar at our Congregational Church in Kingston, Rhode Island, and was a bit disappointed with the rather mild response. But two weeks later, when I was in the hospital having the operation, I received several notes from the class. You can imagine my surprise and delight to discover that a ninth grade boy had included a drawing of a canoe with a person paddling in the bow, a burst of light in the stern, and the words beside it:

YOU'RE NOT TAKING ON THESE RAPIDS ALONE.

I had this photocopied onto little blue cards, ready to be shared with people I meet who are heading into the rapids.



The Paradox of Predestination and Free Will

JOHN C. HORNBURG

Probably the most-discussed question in religion and philosophy is free will and predestination.

The problem in coming to an agreement, whether in a coffee-table discussion or a literary exchange, is that the solution is a paradox in which neither side wins but both somehow turn out to be true.

Complete understanding of paradox, which requires holding two opposite opinions simultaneously, means going beyond ordinary, either/or thinking to the deepest, all-inclusive level of the mind, where our thoughts give over to the intelligence of God, the kingdom of God which is within us (Luke 17:21). For example, it is difficult, as Thomas Merton pointed out, "to understand the notions of justice and mercy unless they are somehow divided from one another and opposed, [but] in God, justice is mercy, mercy is justice." That is, God's just sentence against our sins is the merciful action which keeps our lives on the path of salvation, and his mercy is the just realization of mankind's plight on earth.

Understanding paradox is the profoundest ability of the human intellect because it gives us an experience of how God thinks.

W. Somerset Maugham once told a story which illuminates the paradox of free will and predestination with shocking clarity. It concerns a wealthy merchant who lived long ago in Baghdad. Everyday he sent his best servant to the market for provisions.

One day the servant returned in a state of high agitation. "I saw Death in the market," he told his master, "and he made threatening gestures toward me. I beg one of your fastest horses so I can ride to the town of Samarra and thus escape."

The merchant was loath to give up a horse as well as his best servant, but under the circumstances he consented. The servant rode away immediately without pausing to pack any belongings.

After he left, the merchant went to the market himself and sought out Death. "Why did you make threatening gestures to my servant?" he demanded. "You have frightened him and driven him away."

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"I made no threatening gesture to your servant," Death replied. "That was merely a start of surprise; for, you see, tomorrow I have an appointment with him in Samarra and was shocked to see him in Baghdad today."

This story has such an impact because it integrates both sides of the question—the servant's death was predestined, as indicated by Death's foreknowledge of it, but he also caused it by his own actions. Thus, it actually gives us an experience of the transcendental, all-inclusive level of the mind. The sudden deepening of awareness is what causes our sense of amazement and wonder.

The servant's actions are of course intended to symbolize our own. On the ordinary level of thought we are not privy to God's plan for our life. This makes free will seem much more real to us than predestination. On Palm Sunday Jesus entered Jerusalem to keep his own appointment with death. The only difference being that, established in the paradoxical world of the transcendent, he knew he was working out, freely working out, a predestined plan: "He was . . . cut off out of the land of the living (and) poured out his soul unto death," Is. 53:5,8,12. This also is meant to symbolize mankind and serve as a model: at the level of the mind where our thoughts and God's are the same, we realize why free will and predestination are the same thing: the plan we are working out is our own.

Good Friday

ROBERT VEREECKE, S.J.

I slammed into a door the other day—a glass door. It wasn't that I wasn't looking. I saw where I was going—where I wanted to get to but there was this barrier that just wouldn't let me pass. I wasn't badly hurt—my nose a little out of joint, mostly my ego bruised a little by the embarrassment, thinking everyone was saying, "How stupid! Couldn't he see where he was going?"

Today I feel as if I slammed into that old door again. I am pressed up against the glass, feeling the shock of impact, helpless to get to my destination, speaking soundlessly, hearing others saying, "How stupid!"

Good Friday can do that to you. Trying to make sense of the senseless, trying to reason with an unreasonable absurdity, trying to pray or mourn when you want to scream, to rage against the dying of the light, against this stupid nonsense of living and dying. Jesus dying on a cross for our sins—executed, abandoned, alone, denied, betrayed "pro nobis"—for us.

We continue to slam ourselves up against that reality and feel the shock of the impact—or do we? Perhaps we have become so comfortable with the god/man suffering on the cross that the stark and brutal reality of violent, senseless death no longer shocks us, whether it be the death of Jesus or holocaust, or terrorism or nuclear annihilation.

I will not stand here as a human being living in a world where suffering abounds and say "nice" things about Jesus on the cross. He was denied and betrayed by those he loved. He was rejected by those who had acclaimed him. He was tortured and executed by those who didn't understand him. He cried out to a God who wouldn't hear him. He was abandoned by God who had always been so close to him. He was a victim of this world's senseless desire to destroy what is beautiful. He was defeated by failure, by the power of evil, exhausted by life itself.

To talk about a happy ending "after three days" does an injustice to his reality and ours. For if this day is about anything at all, it is about being stretched beyond our limits, about the days when we want to scream and cry and say, "Enough!" It is about the days when we are torn apart by our self doubt and despair, days when we are so bored that we are paralyzed to do anything new, days when the pain of those we love overwhelms us, days when we ache so much from loss, or failure that we can simply bear no more. Good Friday is the day that is all our days and nights. As the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins says:

I wake and feel the fell of dark, not day.
What hours, O what black hours we have spent
This night! what sights you, heart, saw; ways you went!
And more must, in yet longer light's delay.

We spend most of our lives slamming ourselves against the glass door of reality—failure, rejection, loss, our mortality. Today reminds us that we are our "sweating selves," trapped in a world that will destroy us. Today we cry out with the Lord Jesus, "Shatter the glass! If I bleed, that is alright. At least I shall be free."

Easter Vigil

JOHN LOFTUS, S.J.

I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope
For hope would be hope for the wrong thing; wait without love
For love would be love of the wrong thing; yet there is faith
But the faith and love and the hope are all in the waiting.
Wait without thought, for you are not yet ready for thought:
So the darkness shall be the light, and the stillness the dancing.
—T. S. Eliot, *The Four Quartets*

This night—above all other nights—is truly the Easter in us. Because we again learn to wait. Fidgity and tired, perhaps bored and numbed, or smug and confident, peaceful and content: we all, nonetheless, WAIT. And, at best, we wait without thought: for we are not yet ready for thought—especially about this event.

When we think, we imagine some personal victory or vindication from 2000 years ago. That's powerful, but finally shallow. When we *think*, we think we know what we're celebrating tonight. And therein may lie the poverty of so many of our attempts to really celebrate and enjoy Easter. We *think* we know. And, ironically, as Mr. Eliot again reminds us: "What we do not know is the only thing we know."

In fact, Easter, is too big—and it's not even finished yet! Only the poets approach it; only the make-shift artist in each of us can attend it. For the resurrection of Jesus Christ is "at the still point of our turning world," is the ultimate dance of life, *the* poem without end. It is none of the things we think it to be; it is all of the things we hope it to be. And all we can do is WAIT. Let it *become* Easter.

The *Four Quartets* again:

At the still point of the turning world. Neither flesh nor fleshless
Neither from nor towards; at the still point, there the dance is,
But neither arrest nor movement. And do not call it fixity,
Where past and future are gathered. Neither movement from nor towards,
Neither ascent nor decline. Except for the point, the still point,
There would be no dance, and there is only the dance.
I can only say, *there* we have been: but I cannot say where.
And I cannot say, how long, for that is to place it in time.

My brothers and sisters, I, too, can only say: *there we have been*. There we are again tonight. Easter is not a time, is not a place, is not even only

an event. Easter is a long-awaited CHOICE. "There lives the dearest freshness deep down things" (Gerard Manley Hopkins). There really does—if we CHOOSE to touch these things.

Each of us believes that the cross was clearly not a finished event. It remains a frightful choice. It that's true, all the more clear does it become today: Easter is equally a CHOICE. Unfinished, partial, at least as empty as it is full. Easter, in fact, waits itself upon our hearts, upon our world. And we wait—and we *CHOOSE* to be alive.

"But the faith and hope and the love are all in the waiting." Remember, Easter is a verb. Let God Easter in us.

WELLSPRINGS
by Anthony de Mello, S.J. Doubleday Image Press, Garden City, New York, 1986, 240 pages, paperback, $7.95.

As the author suggests, this book of spiritual exercises needs to be done, not read. The exercises best resemble first-person guided meditations, and can be adapted for group practise or personal reflection. Each portion of this book raises questions in a manner which leads us to deep reflection, and gives us a method for transition from thought to feeling and experience, and then to silence. The questions in these meditations help us explore 'where we are' in our spiritual lives and include issues which touch on the whole person, from reality and restoration to life and silence. The author suggests that before doing each exercise, we consciously adopt this attitude: "that you embark upon the exercise not for yourself alone but for the welfare of creation, of which you are a part, and that any transformation you experience will redound to the benefit of the world." And this book is a powerful tool for transformation. *KLH*

EQUAL PAY FOR COMPARABLE WORTH
by Frances C. Hutner, Praeger Publishers, New York, 1986, 227 pages, hardcover, $29.95.

Most of the 50 million women in the American work force today are being paid two-thirds of the salary that they would be receiving if they were men. Frances Hutner, a labor economist who did her doctoral studies at Columbia, explores the problem of sex-based wage discrimination and reaches an optimistic conclusion. She studies cases to show how procedures like litigation and collective bargaining are already moving "the second sex" in the direction of justice and pay equity. *MFG*

OUR APOLOGIES to Harold Shaw Publishers, Wheaton, IL, for attributing their book, *Walking on Water*, by Madeleine L'Engle, to another publisher. The cloth edition, ISBN# 0-87788-918-X sells at $10.95, the paperback, ISBN# 0-87788-919-8, at $6.95.

Wallace Alcorn, *Momentum*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1986, 171 pages, $5.95.

Jim Auer, *A Teenager's (Absolutely Basic) Introduction to the New Testament*. Liguori, MO: Liguori Publications, 1986, 96 pages, $2.95.

Margaret Hope Bacon, *The Quiet Rebels*. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1985, 224 pages, $8.95.

Laura Belle Barnart, *Touching the Untouchables*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1985, 170 pages, $6.95.

Jacques Barzun, *On Writing, Editing, and Publishing*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986, 148 pages, $5.95.

Ellen Bass, *Our Stunning Harvest*. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1985, 112 pages, $6.95.

J. Sidlow Baxter, *The Master Theme of the Bible*. Part 1: The Doctrine of the Lamb, Wheaton IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1985, 180 pages, $5.95.

David S. Belasic and Paul M. Schmidt, *The Penguin Principles*. Lima, OH: C.S.S. Publishing Company, 1986, 83 pages, $5.95.

E. M. Bounds, *The Best of E. M. Bounds on Prayer*. Grand Rapids, MI: The Baker Book House Company, 1986, 231 pages, $5.95.

Guy Brett, *Through Our Own Eyes*. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1987, 160 pages, $14.95.

Paul Brunton, *The Notebooks of Paul Brunton*. Vol. 3 Practices for the Quest, Relax and Retreat, Burdett, New York: Larson Publications, 1986, 139 pages, $12.50.

Paul Brunton, *The Notebooks of Paul Brunton*. Vol 4, Part 1, Meditation, Burdett, New York: Larson Publications, 1986, 246 pages, $10.95.

John Bunyan, *Pilgrim's Prayer Book*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1986, 150 pages, $5.95.

Anthony Campolo, *Who Switched the Price Tags?* Waco, TX: Word Books, 1986, 200 pages, $11.95.

Evelyn Christenson, *What Happens When God Answers*. Waco, TX: Word Books, 1986, 188 pages, $9.95.

Merle G. Franke, *Lord, Where Are You? I'm Hip-deep in Alligators*. Lima, OH: C.S.S. Publishing Company, 1985, 88 pages, $4.95.

Hans Kung, *Christianity and the World Religions*. New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1986, 446 pages, $19.95.

Jeanne Larson and Madge Micheels-Cyrus, *Seeds of Peace*. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1986, 276 pages, $12.95.

Bo Lozoff, *We're All Doing Time*. Harrisonburg, VA: Banta Co., 1985, 318 pages, $10.00.

Anthony de Mello, *Wellsprings*. Garden City, New York: Image Books, 1986, 240 pages, $7.95.

Lloyd J. Ogilvie, *The Other Jesus*. Waco, TX: Word Books, 1986, 233 pages, $12.95.

Joseph Oppitz, *Autumn Memoirs of St. Alphonsus Liguori*. Liguori, MO: Liguori Publications, 1986, 96 pages, $3.95.

Swami Rama, *Living with the Himalayan Masters*. Honesdale, PA: The Himalayan International Institute, 1980, 490 pages.

William P. Sampson, *The Coming of Consolation*. Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, Inc., 1986, 105 pages, $8.95.

David Sanderlin, *Putting on the New Self*. Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, Inc., 1986, 209 pages, $12.95.

Russell Shaw, *Signs of the Times*. Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, Inc., 1986, 121 pages, $8.95.

R. C. Sproul, *The Holiness of God*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1986, 234 pages, $10.95.

Philip St. Romain, *Growing in Inner Freedom*. Liguoir, MO: Liguori Publications, 1986, 63 pages, $1.95.

Daniel Taylor, *The Myth of Certainty*. Waco, TX: Word Books, 1986, 154 pages, $10.95.

Ingrid Trobisch, *On Our Way Rejoicing*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1986, 229 pages, $6.95.

Alicia Von Stamwitz, *Women of Valor*. Liguori, MO: Liguori Publications, 1986, 63 pages, $1.95.

Lois Waisbrooker, *A Sex Revolution*. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1985, 120 pages, $6.95.

Robert E. Webber, *Evangelicals on the Canterbury Trail*. Waco, TX: Word Books, 1985, 174 pages, $13.95.

James D. Whitehead and Evelyn Eaton Whitehead, *The Emerging Laity*. New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1986, 216 pages, $15.95.

Warren W. Wiersbe, *Listen! Jesus is Praying*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1986, 144 pages, $4.95.

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